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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9664
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RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 8623
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 2945
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RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHGV/US MISSION GENEVA 0721
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DHAKA 001040

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
AIDAC

ROME PLEASE PASS USG DEL TO WORLD FOOD SUMMIT
ROME ALSO FOR FAO AND USUN HSPANOS
DEPT FOR COUNSELOR CHERYL MILLS AND CINDY HUANG
DEPT FOR SCA A/S BLAKE AND SCA/INSB
DEPT ALSO FOR EEB/TPP/MTAA/ABT TGROUT
STATE PASS USAID
USAID/W FOR FRANKLIN MOORE, DAA/AFR
USAID/W FOR MELLIS AND PSULLIVAN, OFFICE DIRECTOR, ANE/SAA
USAID/W FOR JOSETTE LEWIS, EGAT/AGRICULTURE
USAID/W FOR SUSAN BREMS, GH/AA
USAID/W DCHA/FFP MNIMS AND PNOVICK
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH
BRUSSELS FOR USAID PBROWN
NEWYORK FOR USUN DMERCADO
SECDEF FOR SOLIC
JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC FOR J3/J4/J5
NSC FOR PMARCHAM

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAG: EAGR, EAID, SOCI, PINR, PREL, KWMN, BG, IT
SUBJECT: BANGLADESH EMBRACES USG GLOBAL HUNGER AND FOOD SECURITY
INITIATIVE

REF: STATE 107298

1. (U) This is an action request. See paragraphs 2 and 8.

SUMMARY

2. (SBU) Bangladesh and Mission Dhaka are moving ahead with plans to collaborate on food security, as laid out in the USG's new Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative. The Ambassador and senior officials from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) met with Government of Bangladesh (GOB) leaders the week of November 8 to brief them on USG food security plans. Bangladesh's leadership, from the Prime Minister on down, welcomed the United States' renewed commitment to food security. A delegation from Bangladesh, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, is in Rome for the World Food Summit, and we request the USG delegation to seek a meeting with the Bangladesh representatives to keep momentum going.

GEARING UP ON FOOD SECURITY

3. (U) In response to the USG's food security initiative and the designation of Bangladesh as a focus country, Mission Dhaka has ramped up efforts to develop its implementation plan and solicit GOB support. The Ambassador, USAID Mission Director and USAID Director of Agriculture, Dr. Josette Lewis, held a series of consultations on the initiative with the Government of Bangladesh's Ministries of Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock, Food and Disaster Management,

Environment and Forestry, Finance, and Health and Family Welfare between November 8 and 12.

¶4. (SBU) GOB officials warmly welcomed USG engagement on this issue, given that millions of Bangladeshis are food insecure. The USG and GOB officials agreed that Bangladesh's national food action and nutrition plans were natural starting points for collaboration. The Minister of Health and Family Welfare enthusiastically welcomed the integration of nutrition education across the various ministries and suggested he and other ministers should write a letter to the Prime Minister to endorse USAID's Hunger and Food Security initiative.

¶5. (SBU) The Ambassador and visiting Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, Melanne Verveer, highlighted the food security initiative in meetings November 5 and 11 with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. Hasina thanked USG leaders for their focus on food security, noting the huge response from developing nations to Secretary Clinton's meeting on food security held at the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in September. The Prime Minister said her government had plans to address food security and malnutrition, particularly among women and children. The PM said she looked forward to working with the United States on this initiative and observed she would travel to Rome November 15 to participate in the World Food Summit. The Ambassador also wrote to the Prime Minister on the eve of her departure for Rome to emphasize the importance of developing a coordinated country-led strategy.

6.(SBU) Dr. Lewis and members of the Mission Dhaka team also met with donors, members of civil society and agricultural researchers to describe the food security initiative and discussed ways to

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coordinate related programs to fill gaps and avoid overlapping programs. The Executive Chairman of the Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council Dr. Wais Kabir underscored the need for cross-country technology exchange in agricultural research.

COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST

¶7. (SBU) Mission Dhaka will continue to engage the GOB in developing a long-term strategy for achieving food security that builds on the foundation laid by supplemental resources provided by Congress at the end of FY2008 and beginning of FY2009. Mission Dhaka's inter-agency food security task force is developing a plan for FY2010 that will lay the foundation for a country-led, Bangladeshi-owned food security strategy. Following Nov. 4-6 meetings in India with USAID, State and Agriculture officials from Washington and the region, Mission Dhaka is putting the finishing touches on its implementation plan for FY2010 funding.

¶8. (SBU) With its national action plans on food and nutrition, Bangladesh is already ahead of the curve in terms of the global priority placed on country-led food security planning outlined by the United States and the G20 at L'Aquila in July. We need to keep the momentum going. To that end, we recommend USG representatives attending the World Food Summit meet with members of the Bangladesh delegation to reinforce our commitment to partnering with Bangladesh and to discuss ways in which Bangladesh and the United States can move forward on this important initiative.

MORIARTY